

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01 SS-20

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DRC-01 EUR-25 IO-14 OMB-01 FEA-02 EB-11 NEA-10 AF-10

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R 211152Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0832

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 2958

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, CB, LA, CH

SUBJ: MARSHAL DAWEE'S VIEWS ON CHINA

SUMMARY: DURING A HALF HOUR DISCUSSION BEFORE HE AWARDED A MILITARY DECORATION TO FORMER COMUSMACHTHAI MAJOR GENERAL EVANS, MARSHAL DAWEE CONFIRMED TO ME THAT CHOU EN-LAI TOLD HIM IN CHINA THAT PEKING WAS NO LONGER SUPPORTING THE COMMUNIST INSURGENT MOVEMENT IN THAILAND AND THAT THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE OF THAILAND (VOPT) RADIO WAS NO LONGER LOCATED ON CHINESE TERRITORY. CHOU AND OTHER PRC OFFICIALS WERE "PREOCCUPIED WITH THE SOVIET UNION, AND CHOU TOLD DAWEE TO "TELL HIS AMERICAN FRIENDS" THAT THE SOVIETS ARE PROVIDING LARGE SHIPMENT OF ARMS TO HANOI AND "MUST BE WATCHED." DAWEE WAS MUCH IMPRESSED BY THE FORTHRIGHT ATTITUDE OF CHOU, BY THE APPARENT HAPPINESS OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE AND BY THE DISCIPLINE OF CHINESE SOCIETY. WHILE HE IS NOT LIKELY TO RECOMMEND ANY SUDDEN FOREIGN POLICY DEPARTURES, DAWEE TOLD US THAT HE IS CONVINCED THAILAND SHOULD MOVE AHEAD RAPIDLY TO

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PERMIT TRADE WITH THE PRC, PARTICULARLY SINCE CHINESE GOODS

ARE FREELY ENTERING THAILAND ANYWAY.

1. DURING A SHORT HALF-HOUR CONVERSATION FEBRUARY 21, WITH DCM AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT TOVAR PRESENT, DAWEE TOLD ME HE HAD A SOCIABLE BUT LARGELY NON-SUBSTANTIVE MEETING IN PEKING WITH CHOU EN-LAI, DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MINISTER OF SPORTS AND CULTURE AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE. HE FOUND CHOU VIGOROUS AND BELIEVES HIS POLITICAL POSITION STRONG. DAWEE HEARD SOME RUMBLINGS IN PEKING THAT FOLLOWERS OF LIN PIAO ARE STILL ACTIVE AND ARE TRYING TO UNDERMINE CHOU BUT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THEY SERIOUSLY THREATEN HIS POSITION.

2. AFTER THIS LARGER MEETING, CHOU ASKED THE OTHERS PRESENT TO LEAVE THE ROOM, AND HE AND DAWEE TALKED FOR SOME TIME PRIVATELY. DURING THIS DISCUSSION DAWEE MADE THE POINT THAT U.S. FORCES COULD LEAVE SEA IF CHINA WOULD STOP SUPPORTING THE THAI INSURGENCY AND OTHER DISSIDENT MOVEMENTS IN THE AREA. CHOU SAID NOTHING ABOUT U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND. HE DID ADMIT THAT THE PRC HAD FORMERLY SUPPORTED THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCY MOVEMENT IN THAILAND, SINCE THE THAI GOVERNMENT AT THAT TIME WAS A "DICTATORSHIP" WHICH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING THE THAI PEOPLE. CHOU SAID, HOWEVER, THAT WITH THE RECENT CHANGE IN THE THAI GOVERNMENT, THIS SUPPORT HAS STOPPED. CHOU ADDED THAT CHINA IS NOT NOW "EXPORTING COMMUNISM" UNLESS IT IS CONSIDERED SUITABLE AND IS FREELY ACCEPTED BY OTHER PEOPLE. DAWEE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS FACE-TO-FACE MEETING WITH CHOU TO ASK ALSO ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE VOPT RADIO STATION AND WAS TOLD THAT THIS STATION IS "NOT NOW IN CHINA." CHOU DID NOT VOLUNTEER WHAT ITS PRESENT LOCATION MIGHT BE.

3. DAWEE WAS MUCH IMPRESSED WITH RHE "PREOCCUPATION" WHICH CHOU SHOWED IN BOTH THEIR LARGE AND EYEBALL-TO-EYEBALL MEETINGS OVER THE SOVIET UNION. CHOU AND OTHER CHINESE OFFICIALS ACCUSED THE SOVIETS OF BEING "LIARS" AND OF ATTEMPTING TO "BLACKMAIL" CHINA. EVEN MORE, THEY STRESSED THAT THE SOVIETS ARE NOT EVEN COMMUNISTS ANY LONGER BUT HAVE BECOME DECADENT CAPITALISTS. CHINESE OFFICIALS TOOK A FEW SWIPES AT "U.S.

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IMPERIALISTS", BUT IT WAS OBVIOUS TO DAWEE THAT THEY REGARDED THE SOVIETS AS BEING FAR WORSE.

4. IN THEIR PRIVATE MEETING CHOU ASKED DAWEE TO "TELL YOUR AMERICAN FRIENDS" TO "WATCH THE RUSSIANS." CHOU SAID THAT WHILE CHINA HAS STOPPED SENDING MILITARY SUPPLIES TO NORTH VIETNAM AND IS LIMITING ITS SHIPMENTS TO ITEMS SUCH AS MEDICINE AND FOODSTUFFS, THERE IS A STEADY STREAM OF SOVIET

SHIPS INTO HAIPHONG. DAWEE HAD THE CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT CHOU WANTED HIM TO TELL US IT IS THE SOVIET UNION AND NOT CHINA WHICH IS PROVIDING ARMS TO HANOI. REGARDING THE VIETNAM SITUATION IN GENERAL, CHOU STRESSED THAT NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM SHOULD RESOLVE THEIR OWN DIFFERENCES FREE FROM ALL OUTSIDE INFLUENCES.

5. DAWEE WAS GIVEN A TOUR OF THE PEKING SUBWAY SYSTEM WHICH DROVE HOME TO HIM DRAMATICALLY CHINESE CONCERN WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A RUSSIAN ATTACK. HE SAID THERE ARE SIX OR SEVEN "COMPOUNDS" (PRESUMABLY CO-LOCATED WITH SUBWAY STATIONS) AROUND PEKING, EACH OF WHICH IS CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING 80 TO 100,000 PEOPLE. THESE ARE "SEVEN LEVELS" BENEATH THE EARTH'S SURFACE AND ARE FULLY STOCKED WITH WATER, CANNED FOODSTUFFS AND OTHER SUPPLIES. THE CHINESE ALSO IMPRESSED ON HIM THE FACT THERE ARE 160 TO 170 SOVIET DIVISIONS ON THEIR BORDER WHILE CHINA HAS ONLY ABOUT 60 DIVISIONS IN THIS AREA.

6. LAOS AND CAMBODIA ALSO CAME IN FOR DISCUSSION DURING THE PRIVATE MEETING. DAWEE SAID CHOU ASKED WHY THAILAND HAD "SENT TROOPS" TO LAOS. DAWEE SAID HE REPLIED IN A STRAIGHT-FORWARD MANNER THAT THAILAND HAD DONE SO BECAUSE IT WAS "AFRAID OF CHINA." THAILAND WANTED TO "EXTINGUISH THE FIRE" AS FAR AWAY FROM THAILAND'S BORDERS AS POSSIBLE. CHOU DID NOT PURSUE THE MATTER. HE DID SPECULATE THAT THE COALITION GOVERNMENT IN LAOS WOULD SOON BE FORMED AND GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WELCOMED THIS DEVELOPMENT.

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7. ON CAMBODIA, CHOU ASKED WHY THAI TROOPS WERE PRESENT IN THE GKR. DAWEE POINTED OUT THERE ARE NO COMBAT TROOPS THERE, ONLY LIAISON PERSONNEL AND COMMUNICATORS. DAWEE DID NOTE THAT THAILAND IS TRAINING CAMBODIANS IN THAILAND. CHOU PICKED THIS UP WITH INTEREST AND URGED HIM TO TELL HIS GOVERNMENT "NOT TO TRAIN TOO MANY CAMBODIANS." CHOU SAID THE PRC HAS NOT RECOGNIZED THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT IN EXILE EVEN THOUGH IT HAS GIVEN REFUGE TO SIHANOUK. HE CONTRASTED THIS WITH THE SOVIETS WHO, HE SAID, HAVE RECOGNIZED THE SIHANOUK GOVERNMENT.

8. THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL SUBJECTS ALSO CAME UP DURING DAWEE'S DISCUSSION IN PEKING:

(A) DIESEL FUEL. THE CHINESE AGREED TO SELL ADDITIONAL DIESEL OIL TO THAILAND. THE PRICE IS YET TO BE NEGOTIATED BUT WILL BE BELOW THE WORLD MARKET PRICE.

(B) CHINA ROAD. DAWEE SAID HE NEGLECTED TO RAISE
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THIS WITH CHOU EN-LAI BUT DID BRING IT UP WITH THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO STRESSED THE FACT THERE ARE NO CHINESE COMBAT TROOPS ALONG THIS ROAD; ONLY CONSTRUCTION PERSONNEL ARE PRESENT BUT NO "REAL SOLDIERS."

(C) PHOTOGRAPHS OF MAO TSE-TUNG. MEMBERS OF DAWEE'S PARTY WHO HAD BEEN IN CHINA ON EARLIER VISITS WERE STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT THERE WERE FAR FEWER PICTURES OF MAO IN PEKING. EARLIER THESE PICTURES HAD BEEN IN EVIDENCE EVERYWHERE BUT THEY ARE NOW LIMITED TO "IMPORTANT PLACES ONLY."

(D) INDIAN OCEAN. CHOU ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN BUT SAID THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HAD NOT YET AGREED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOVIET NAVAL BASE IN THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS. DAWEE SAID CONSTRUCTION OF THE KRA CANAL WOULD BE A BAD MOVE SINCE THAILAND COULD NOT DEFEND THIS WATERWAY AND IT MIGHT WELL BE TAKEN OVER BY SOME ONE ELSE (I.E., THE USSR). CHOU LAUGHED BUT MADE NO COMMENT.

(E) WHEN DAWEE ASKED CHOU WHY CHINA SOLD OIL TO

JAPAN, CHOU REPLIED THAT THIS WAS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN NEEDED PETROCHEMICALS. DAWEE JOKINGLY URGED CHINA TO BE CAREFUL AND POINTED OUT THAT ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO JAPAN HAD OCCUPIED CHINA. CHOU AGREED ON THE NEED FOR CAUTION IN DEALING WITH JAPAN.

(F) PARACEL ISLANDS. THE DISPUTE OVER THE PARACELS DID NOT COME UP DURING DAWEE'S TALK WITH CHOU BUT HE DID ASK THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF SPORTS AND CULTURE ABOUT THE PROBLEM. THE DEPUTY MINISTER SAID THAT THESE ISLANDS CLEARLY BELONG TO CHINA. ASKED WHY CHINA DID NOT OCCUPY OTHER DISPUTED ISLANDS IN THE AREA, THE MINISTER SAID CHINA HAD NO CLAIM TO THESE.

9. DAWEE'S IMPRESSIONS. DAWEE SAID THAT WHILE HE CERTAINLY WAS NOT "BRAINWASHED" HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH TWO FACTS: FIRST THAT "ALL OF THE CHINESE ARE HAPPY," AND SECONDLY THAT CHINESE SOCIETY IS HIGHLY DISCIPLINED. DAWEE VISITED A COMMUNE IN THE PEKING AREA AND WAS FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK, THE FACT THAT THE COMMUNE HAD ITS OWN CANNING FACTORY, AND THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE. HE NOTED THAT THE
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COMMUNE HAD ITS OWN KINDERGARTEN AND SAID THE "USIS PROPAGANDA" TO THE EFFECT THAT CHINESE CHILDREN ARE SEPARATED FROM THEIR PARENTS WHEN THEY REACH SCHOOL AGE IS NOT VALID. GIVING US THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT, DAWEE SAID PERHAPS THIS SITUATION HAS CHANGED IN RECENT YEARS. DAWEE WAS IMPRESSED ALSO BY THE CHINESE WILLINGNESS TO SHOW HIM ANYTHING HE WANTED TO SEE. HE POINTED OUT TO HIS GUIDES ON ARRIVAL THAT HE WAS A "GOODWILL EMISSARY" AND THAT HE WANTED TO SEE THE "REAL CHINA." HE ASKED IF HE MIGHT VISIT ANY HOUSE HE WISHED TO SEE. HIS GUIDES ASSURED HIM HE COULD. WHILE EN ROUTE TO THE GREAT WALL, DAWEE TESTED THIS SYSTEM, POINTED TO A HOUSE AT RANDOM AND ASKED TO SEE IT. HIS GUIDES COMPLIED AND HE WAS GIVEN A TOUR OF THE HOUSE AND PROPERTY WHICH HE FOUND TO BE SPIC AND SPAN.

10. THESE ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWEE'S CHINA VISIT. HIS COMMENTS ON TERMINATION OF PRC SUPPORT FOR THE THAI INSURGENCY ARE PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT AND, IF TRUE, WOULD SEEM TO US TO REPRESENT A MAJOR SHIFT IN CHINESE TACTICS. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, PEKING HAS PREVIOUSLY TOLD THAI VISITORS THAT PRC GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTERFERE IN OTHERS INTERNAL AFFAIRS BUT CCP MIGHT FEEL OBLIGATED TO SUPPORT A FRATERNAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT. CHOU DID NOT MAKE THIS DISTINCTION. I LEFT WITH DAWEE A LIST OF ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE INTERNAL SITUATION IN CHINA, AND WILL HOPE TO HAVE A LONGER MEETING WITH HIM WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO TO EXPLORE HIS IMPRESSIONS FURTHER.

11. AN MFA OFFICIAL WHO ACCOMPANIED DAWEE TO CHINA BUT DID NOT SIT IN ON THE INTERVIEW WITH CHOU DEBRIEFED DAWEE IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARD. THE OFFICIAL BELIEVED THAT THERE COULD HAVE BEEN A COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEM AND THAT CHOU MAY NOT HAVE GIVEN DAWEE SUCH A CATEGORICAL ASSURANCE ABOUT FUTURE CHINESE NON-INVOLVEMENT IN THE THAI INSURGENCY AS DAWEE THOUGHT (SEE SEPTTEL). WE WILL CHECK FURTHER.
KINTNER

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